

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 17136 081800Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FOR EUR/NE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, BE
SUBJECT: COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES

REF: A) STATE 22937, B) STATE 207310, C) STATE 218958

1. OUR DRAFT SUBMISSION FOR THE 1978 COUNTRY REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES IS THE SAME AS LAST YEAR'S (REF A) WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONS REFLECTING THE NEW, MORE COMPLETE GUIDANCE CONTAINED IN REFTEL C.

2. FOR PARAGRAPH TWO, GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES RELATING TO THE FULFILLMENT OF SUCH VITAL NEEDS AS FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION, WE PROPOSE SUBSTITUTING THE FOLLOWING DRAFT LANGUAGE:

BELGIUM CONTINUES TO ENJOY ONE OF THE HIGHEST PER CAPITA INCOMES IN THE WORLD AND IS ONE OF THE MOST AFFLUENT COUNTRIES IN EUROPE. THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO POLICIES ENSURING THAT THESE BENEFITS ARE DISTRIBUTED EQUITABLY THROUGHOUT THE ECONOMY. AS A RESULT, THE GOVERNMENT PURSUES A GENEROUS

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WAGE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT POLICY.

THERE IS A RELATIVE ABSENCE OF CLASS DISTINCTION, AND A COMMON EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT SERVES ALL ECONOMIC LEVELS. BELGIUM'S TAX SYSTEM REDOUNDS TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE RELATIVELY POORER CLASSES. WOMEN ARE HIGHLY REGARDED IN BELGIUM AND MANY HAVE

POSITIONS OF DISTINCTION, POWER AND IMPORTANCE
IN THE FIELDS OF POLITICS, BUSINESS, DIPLOMACY,
SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND THE ARTS, TO NAME BUT A
FEW. CHAMBERS

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